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### This Writer Objects to Sweet Mannered Persons

To ordinary human beings few persons are so annoying as those with a consistently sweet manner, says a writer in the London Times. The invariably cheerful are trying in their hearty way; they are easier to bear with equanimity than the invariably sweet.

A robust cheerfulness may easily be put down to insensibility. When our own more delicate nerves and senses are suffering, we may wring consolation and a heartening pride out of comparing ourselves with those who suffer so little that they can keep up their spirits. But about a sweet manner there is always a hint of accusation. It lays claim both to suffering more acute than our own and to superiority to suffering. So far from admitting that platitude is molesting—a cold in the head is a nuisance—it takes toothache but as a call for more sweetness. Wet through, chilled to the bone, even undistiguably red-nosed, it is still sweet. The fixity of it becomes maddening. The grave, sweet eye, the sweet smile on the mouth, the slight tilt of the head to one side, the measured and sugared voice, the unalterably sweet and hopeful sentiments, all seem to accuse our more natural selves of being creatures of a lower grade.

We long to bring the sweet one down to our own level, to irritate them somehow into an exhibition of common human crossness or unfairness. And, failing, we take refuge behind the charge that there can be nothing direct and honest left behind the confirmed manner. Sincerity must obviously have long deserted the character that can thus hide itself behind a mask. The sweetness, we vow, is all a pretense, a pretty covering for unthinkable depths of guilt and selfishness and hatred. Only fools, of which there are plenty, could be taken in by it.

### Onlooker Dreams of the Origin of Round Cheeses

The damaged brig has for neighbor a bark of humbler degree, a river barge in course of lading with the round cheeses of the country. Tossed from one to another, they pass with mathematical precision through the hands of three stout Dutchmen, before reaching their allotted berth. The onlooker sets about counting them mechanically, till, speculating whose evenly robust appetites they are destined to satisfy, he loses count. . . . Of the quiet, level meadows, he dreams where these golden discs had their remote origin. From thence his fancy flies to Alpine pastures, where the cattle feed amid the ceaseless music of their bells. And then to a vale amongst the mountains; it is late evening; he is seated in a garden, in the cool darkness. And out of the darkness and the distance there comes a faint peal, as of a carillon miles away. Closer and closer it draws; surely a chime of bells. But how brought nearer? Not a footfall can he hear, but still the chime advances. Only when it is all but abreast of where he is seated does he catch the muffled tread of many a hoof upon the road, deep in dust, and know that the kine are pacing homeward, bringing an echo of the mountain's music to the bosom of the plain.—Harry Christopher Minchin, in Talks and Traits.

### When Wood Duck Nests

Far from its natural element, water, and often a mile or more from the nearest watercourse, the wood duck, unlike other members of its family, usually builds its nest. However, the difficulty of transporting the family from the nest to the feeding grounds is solved in a truly remarkable way. No sooner are the eggs hatched, and the ducklings, about the size of bumblebees, than each parent bird takes a little one in its bill, wriggles through the opening in the chestnut tree or white oak which harbors the nest, and, with a quick glance lest some enemy may lurk near, flies swiftly overland to creek or water hole. Here the tiny burdens are dropped gently into the water. Without previous swimming lessons, these newly hatched mites dart over the surface of the water for the cover of marshgrass or lily pad, where they hide until the return of their parents with more of their brothers and sisters.

### Highest Points

The maximum difference in the elevation of land in the United States is 14,777 feet, according to the United States Department of the Interior. Mount Whitney, the highest point, 14,501 feet above sea level and a point in Death valley is 278 feet below sea level. These two places are both in California and are less than ninety miles apart. This difference is small, however, as compared with that in Asia, says the Compressed Air Magazine. Mount Everest rises 29,002 feet above sea level, whereas the shores of the Dead sea are 1,200 feet below sea level—a total difference of 30,202 feet. In Europe the difference between the highest and lowest land points is about 15,868 feet.

### Short, the Tall Man

"Isn't a lawsuit involving a patent right about the dullest thing imaginable?" asked one lawyer of another. "Not always," was the reply. "I attended a trial of that character not long ago that was really funny. A tall lawyer named Short was reading a 6,000-word document he called a brief!"—Everybody's Magazine.

### Huge Reservoir Built to Store Flood Waters

The erratic flow of the streams of the intermountain desert country of the West makes extremely difficult the problem of engineering in that region. These streams are characterized by extraordinary fluctuations in discharge, varying from zero to enormous floods, and changes occur at irregular intervals. Owing to such fluctuations the constructing engineers who are building large storage works are forced to plan types of structures that are not common in regions where streams are more dependable.

Out in Nevada the government has built a remarkable dam, known as the Lahontan, in Carson river, to store the floods for irrigation. Carson river is subject to sudden floods, which are occasionally repeated at short intervals. The storage reservoir does not contain the entire flood discharge, so that provision must be made to take care of the surplus.

Enormous spillways are constructed at each end of the dam, which converge toward the middle of the river, where a circular stilling pool of concrete has been built.

In the center is a concrete amphitheater, into which the floods are turned and stilled. The wide steps of the spillways serve to check the downrush of the floods as they are turned out of the reservoir to drop back into the river 100 feet below. The capacity of the spillways is 30,000 cubic feet per second, or the flow of a big river.

### Mine in Sweden Has Been Worked for Over 700 Years

The oldest company in the world is that which owns the Falun Mine in Sweden. This mine has been worked for 700 years without a break and has never changed hands. The company is called the Stora Kopparbergs Bergslags Aktiebolag, and there is evidence that it was mining copper in the year 1225.

In these 700 years the Falun mine has yielded over a ton of gold, 15 tons of silver, and about half a million tons of copper. Now it produces 80,000 tons of iron pyrites every year. The mine is a huge hole in the ground, nearly a quarter of a mile long, half that distance across, and some 200 feet deep.

Men dig for iron pyrites 1,000 feet below its level and there are 18 miles of galleries containing nearly 3,000 separate chambers.

A descent into these depths is a strange and rather terrifying experience. First the visitor must don heavy black serge overalls and a wide-brimmed black hat. He is given an acetylene torch shaped something like a kettle.

The visitor makes his way down a path of duckboards. The air grows colder and colder, and at the end of ten minutes he must walk warily in case he slips on the ice. The galleries are fearsome places with holes 800 feet deep, into which the visitor might fall if it were not for the red flares burnt by the guides.

### An Elastic Clientele

Some time ago there died in Pittsburgh a quaint person who was known as "the nestor of the oil business." It appears that he was a strange and wonderful compound—self-made, uneducated, but a man of great natural force.

Once he had a fight on with a great oil company. A conference was arranged, and the representative of the company had prepared an imposing array of figures showing this gentleman how badly they had beaten him. The statement included a paragraph to the effect that the company had 2,700 gas users in a certain town. As a matter of fact, the number was less than 500. The old oil man ran down the list, commenting pithily on the various items. When he came to this particular town he ran his finger along it and said: "Say, if the girl had hit that planer another lick you'd have had 27,000, wouldn't you?"—Kansas City Star.

### Still Ahead

Grace H., a stenographer, wished to have her hair bobbed. Now her sweetheart, a physician, age thirty-two, objected because he thought that a woman, age twenty-seven, was too old for bobbed hair.

But off came Grace's hair. And when Doctor Jim arrived that evening there was a long grim silence. Finally she broke it. "Oh, Jim," she exclaimed, "I feel so young with my hair short—quite too young to go with an old man with a mustache. You'll just have to shave yours if you keep going with me."

Now Doctor Jim's eyebrow mustache was one of his prides. But so conclusive was her argument that now he is going without it and his few friends who are next to the story are complimenting the girl on her rare genius.

### Salt From Earth Floors

In a Southern woman's recollections of Civil war times, a novel means of obtaining salt resorted to in those days is described.

"A common practice," she says, "on the part of people who sadly missed salt as an ingredient of their food, was to dig up the earth floors of the smokehouses and by a sort of distilling process get out of the earth the salt that had dripped from the pork and other meats that had been cured in the smokehouses." This made a fairly good substitute for the salt that could no longer be obtained from the closed channels of commerce.—Industrial Student.

### Each Showed the Way to Pure Modern Music

The fountain source of all was, of course, Bach. When Bach had shown the way, there was a surge and uprush of pure music in central Europe to which nothing in the history of other arts can be compared, unless it be the building of the French cathedrals. It was as if a vast gold mine had been discovered, opening out to those happy mortals who had first right of entry long galleries of metal, precious and pure; nor did they waste their matchless opportunity, but tirelessly worked on, minting in streams a beautiful clear coinage which was good in all the markets of the world. Of almost all the great composers of the Nineteenth century fertility is the conspicuous trait; they were limited only by the capacity of their hands to write down what their invention dictated. And what they dictated was, broadly speaking, all good. Haydn's symphonies, Schubert's songs, remain. Countless, they still have meaning for us—more meaning than most of the music of the day. The world had not changed, but the human mind had suddenly found means to appreciate it newly, and the whole story of creation, all the sumptuous diversities of human life, all the accumulated experience of the ages, was virgin soil, a child's garden, of richness and freshness inexhaustible.—Basil De Selincourt, in "The English Secret."

### Scientists Find Brass Safest for Saucepan

An important household question—the choice of a saucepan—has recently been investigated at the municipal

laboratory of Helsingfors, Finland. Many kinds of metals and other materials are in use for the manufacture of saucepans and other cooking utensils, but owing to the solvent action of some foodstuffs it is certain that chemical salts of the materials used are absorbed to some extent by human beings.

A test was made by boiling, for three hours, two pounds of red currants in a number of saucepans of different materials, and then, by chemical analysis, finding how much of the saucepans had been dissolved in the food, says London Tit-Bits.

The best figure obtained was that for brass, which was 250 times better than enamel. Brightly polished brass cooking utensils are used on a large scale in the East.

Copper, tin, nickel and aluminum vessels were all found good, but iron was found to be much more easily attacked by foodstuffs. Tin, next to polished brass, stood out as the best material for the lining of cooking utensils.

### Souvenirs

Almost every tourist who visits Egypt buys a scarab from a native curio seller. In Peru the Quichua Indians, descendants of the Incas, occasionally offer for sale small golden images unearthed from the ruins, which have much value. From the days of the Spanish conquest Peru has been the Mecca of treasure seekers, some of whom have made wonderfully rich strikes. On the plain of Chimu, near Truxillo, is a great mound said to contain treasure of fabulous value. Several attempts have been made to tunnel into it, but the sand has always poured down and stopped the work of excavation.

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